

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGSC SPOP, SOCI, EAID, BL

SUBJ: CARDINAL PRESENTS LETTER TO GOB RE BIRTH CONTROL

REF: A. LA PAZ 7596, B. LA PAZ 7455, C. LA PAZ 7371

1. THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF BOLIVIA (HEADED BY CARDINAL MAURER) SENT AN EIGHT PAGE LETTER DATED OCTOBER 1, 1976, TO GOB PRESIDENT HUGO BANZER SUAREZ (LETTER BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT). THE BISHOPS ALLEGE THAT THE GOB PROGRAM OSTENSIBLY FOR THE PROTECTION OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN AND FAMILY WELL-BEING IS IN REALITY A PROGRAM TO LIMIT BIRTHS.

2. THE LETTER CITES AN AGREEMENT OF DECEMBER 31, 1974 BETWEEN VARIOUS GOB MINISTERS AND MR JOHN R OLESON, DIRECTOR OF USAID BOLIVIA WHICH INTENDED TO CREATE QUOTE AN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE DSVELOPMENT AND FINANCING OF FAMILY PLANNING AND RELATED HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE BOLIVIAN POPULATION UNQUOTE. EXTRACTS FROM THE AGREEMENT MENTION: THE ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAMS OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD; CENAFa (AN INVESTIGATIVE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS ENTITY); THE PILOT HEALTH CENTER IN AYO-AYO; AND THE PRIVATE INSTITUTION, ABES THE BOLIVIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SEXUAL EDUCATION.

3. STILL REFERRING TO THE DECEMBER 31, 1974 AGREEMENT, THE LETTER NOTES THAT WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF USAID, CENAFa, AND THE MATERNAL-CHILD DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH THAT

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DURING 1974 THE MINISTRY INCORPORATED SERVICES OF RESPONSIBLE

PARENTHOOD IN FIVE OF ITS PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS. IT THEN NOTES PLANS FOR TEN SEMINARS FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL AND INVESTIGATIVE PROJECTS IN DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY PLANNING; AND THE PROGRAMMING OF MEDICAL ARTICLES TO ASSURE THE ADEQUATE AND CONTINUING PROVISION OF SERVICES OF FAMILY PLANNING TO FERTILE WOMEN, INITIALLY 10,000 (FOR TWO YEARS), AND AUGMENTING THIS NUMBER TO A 35,000 MINIMUM PER YEAR. FINALLY THE LETTER NOTES USAID RECOMMENDATION THAT THE GOB SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH UNFPA/PPF AND/OR PATHFINDER TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ARTICLES FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS BEGINNING IN 1976.

4. LETTER CONTINUES BY QUOTING FROM AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOB AND THE UN FUND FOR POPULATION AFFAIRS OF FEBRUARY-MARCH 1976 REGARDING THE SUPPLYING OF BIRTH CONTROL LITERATURE AND CONTRACEPTIVE MATERIAL. APPARENTLY CHURCH OBTAINED ALL DOCUMENTATION REGARDING THIS AGREEMENT.

5. ATTACHED AS AN APPENDIX WAS DOCUMENT ALLEGEDLY FROM THE MATERNAL-CHILD DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENTITLED ATTENTION FAMILY PLANNING. ONE PARAGRAPH STATES THAT QUOTE EACH MOTHER'S CLUB RECEIVES ATTENTION IN THE CENTRAL HOSPITAL ONE AFTERNOON A WEEK; THERE THEY RECEIVE PRODUCTS FROM CARITAS. SO THAT THE GRANTING OF A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PRODUCTS IS NOT WITHHELD IT IS NECESSARY TO SUBMIT TO THE APPLICATION OF THE IUD (SPIRAL) UNQUOTE

6. COMMENT: THE LETTER HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN PUBLISHED AND ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, THE GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THE ALLEGATIONS. THE LETTER DOES NOT RPT NOT CALL FOR A SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITIES ALTHOUGH IT IMPLIES THAT THE GOB COULD NOT CONTINUE A BIRTH CONTROL PROGRAM ONCE THE FACTS ARE ESTABLISHED. THE ALLEGATION THAT FOOD (TITLE II) FROM THE CATHOLIC CHARITY CARITAS IS WITHHELD TO FORCE ACCEPTANCE OF INTERUTERINE DEVICES IN NO WAY REFLECTS ANY OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL POLICY KNOWN TO THE MISSION. CARITAS DEPENDS ON THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE AND AN INVESTIGATION OF ITS PRACTICES, IF THEY PROVE AS DESCRIBED, COULD CAUSE THE CHURCH AS MUCH EMBARRASSMENT AS THE GOB. SOME OF THE LOCAL PRESS SUPPORTS THE CHURCH'S REQUEST FOR AN INVESTIGATION WHILE THE CATHOLIC DAILY PRESENCIA HAS REPRINTED WARNING OF THE BISHOPS COUNCIL AGAINST BIRTH CONTROL FIRST ISSUED MARCH 1975.
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